8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

47.

Sympathy.

In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarim (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri mâl ʿal-fasʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Yʾa-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ġarīb fil-bilād ḥaṭīye.
Yʾa ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ġarīb, yaḥwati,
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
"Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmūds.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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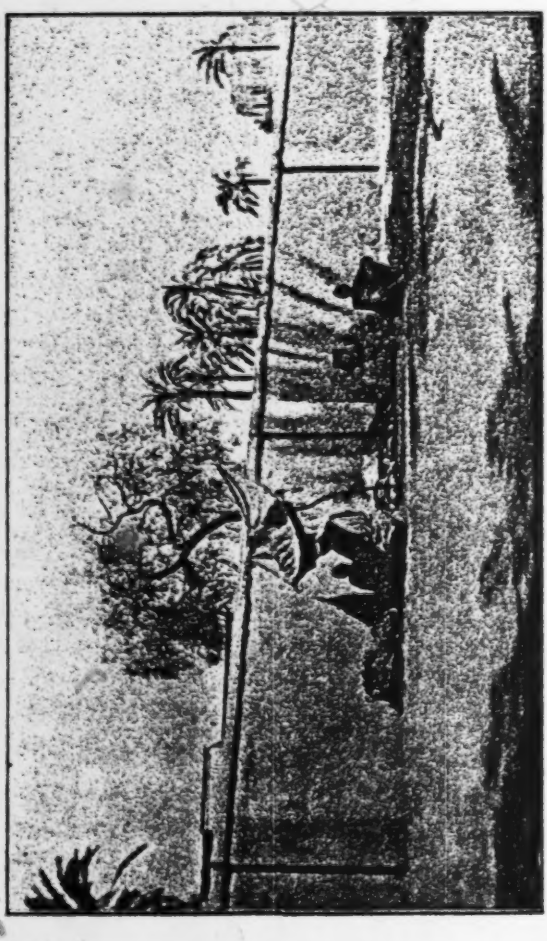
443
351
516
137



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Giseh.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments. 515 [368]

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike. 514 562 517 [276] [277] [533] [535] [351] 562 [182] [171]

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband 512 [264] [513] [562]